

ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A case study of a clubhouse community

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ABSTRACT

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This study was conducted in the context of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse, which is a community for mental health rehabilitees. The purpose of the research was to describe the clubhouse community from the aspects of peer support, equality, empowerment and voluntarism. Moreover, the aim was to find out how the previously mentioned concepts are defined by the community members, what type of new dimensions they arise and how they can be used for developing the community.

The study was conducted as a qualitative research. Thematic interviews and observation were used to collect the material. The materials of the research were analysed and interpreted by thematizing.

The interviews were conducted with the members and the employees of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. The interviews consisted of two group interviews with the members and four individual interviews with the employees. Moreover, the observation took place during my practical placement in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse in Spring 2010.

Two types of support were identified: peer support and “alike support”. Peer support was challenged for including categorizing tone in it. The term “alike support” was suggested to describe the peer relations in a less categorizing way. Furthermore, the results show that the scope of voluntarism and responsibility in the community was challenging to define and it was considered a personal matter. The results reveal that the principles of anti-discriminatory practice are present in Clubhouse; however at the same time the results emphasize the importance of anti-discriminatory practice in terms of terminology and equal treatment. Equal decision-making in clubhouse is challenged by the variable activity in the house meetings where the decisions are made, and by the less talkative members not participating as much as the talkative members. The topics discussed in this study can be used for developing the community of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. Moreover, it is recommended that other clubhouses can reflect the results of this study in comparison to their community.

Keywords: community, mental health, qualitative research, clubhouse, community development, anti-discrimination

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1 INTRODUCTION

Clubhouse is a fairly new rehabilitation model for mental health rehabilitees in Finland. The Finnish clubhouses have been researched previously mainly on the basis of introducing the clubhouse model or evaluating their practice. For instance a research conducted by the Rehabilitation Foundation (2009) dealt with the effects of clubhouse regarding the members' well-being, social integration and management of life, the economic aspects of clubhouse, and the challenges experienced by different clubhouses. However, Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse was established in 2009 and therefore it has not been included in the national researches associated with clubhouses. I think it is interesting and beneficial to research a community which has not been widely researched earlier and which can use the results of this study for developing its practices.

The motivation for researching the clubhouse community arose during my practical placement in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse in Spring 2010. The placement offered me a chance to become familiar with the principles and the rehabilitation model of clubhouse. I noticed that peer support and empowerment are concepts which are usually connected to clubhouse and community rehabilitation in general. Moreover, the principles of voluntarism and equality are written in the universal clubhouse standards. In addition, our studies in social services include the theoretical aspect of the previously mentioned concepts. I begin to wonder how those concepts are understood and defined by the members of a certain community and what type of new elements they may arise. The Degree Programme in Social Services, which I have been studying, focuses on community development and therefore it felt appropriate to add aspects of community development to the thesis.

The aim of this study is to describe the community in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse from the aspects of peer support, equality, empowerment, voluntarism and community development. Moreover, the aim is to describe how the previously mentioned concepts are understood in a certain context, what type of new dimensions they arise and how they can be used for developing the clubhouse community. Furthermore, the study

concentrates on the principles of anti-discriminatory practice which became essential on the basis of the research material. By describing the clubhouse community I aim to raise awareness of the strengths and the developmental areas of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. I hope this research would increase the knowledge on clubhouses as rehabilitative communities and the main principles of clubhouse as the basis for the model. Moreover, I hope that the study could raise awareness on the importance of anti-discriminatory practice in the mental health and other social and health care sector.

This research is about Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse and in this study it is referred by using a short form “clubhouse”. Whenever the discussion is about clubhouse as a rehabilitation model, it is explained in the context.

2 CLUBHOUSE

This chapter presents clubhouse regarding its history, the rehabilitation model, Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse and the standards. The aim is to give a general idea of the clubhouse model.

2.1 History

The clubhouse model was established by the initiative of mental health patients in United States in 1940's. A group of mental health rehabilitees felt excluded by the society after a care period in a psychiatric hospital. They decided to keep in contact with each other in order to prevent ending up to hospital again. The rehabilitees knew that they would need premises where they can meet and in that place they would be respected and accepted genuinely, regardless of their diagnoses. The social service system considered them incapable of living a normal life including employment and relationships due to their mental illness. However, the rehabilitees believed that they can live in the society as equally as others if having a supporting and encouraging

community where they are valued. The first form of clubhouse was called “Fountain House” and it set the principles for the worldwide clubhouse model. (Pöyhönen 2003, 29-30.)

The first clubhouse was established as a self-help group but by time the need for employed staff increased. The clubhouse started to highlight its main principles of voluntarism and life-long membership in the community. The daily activities were formed by the work ordered day and the evenings were left for other social activities. The clubhouse stood out for the unusual power relationship between the employees and the rehabilitees. The clubhouse model was known for the mutual respect and trust between the employees and the members and the fact that the employees and members work together. (Pöyhönen 2003, 30-31.)

Fountain House, the very first clubhouse, was financed to launch an international training program in 1976. Ever since, the international training centers have been established all around the world, one of them located in Sörnäinen, Helsinki. In 1994 International Center for Clubhouse Development was established to coordinate the international clubhouse model. (Helsingin Klubitalot Ry.)

2.2 Clubhouse as a rehabilitative community

The clubhouse model is defined as psychosocial rehabilitation where the focus is in the needs of the rehabilitees. The clubhouse membership is life-long and safeguards the rights of the member in the clubhouse. The community aims to offer four basic rights for its members: a right to a place where to come and feel welcomed and valued, a right to a pleasant work, a right to delightful and equal relationships, and a right to a place where one can always return. The main elements in the clubhouse are the work ordered day, supporting the members in employment, education and accommodation, guidance concerning social and health issues, free time activities, keeping in contact with members and equal decision-making in the community. Clubhouse offers different forms of supported employment which is a pre-step to a full time employment. The clubhouse principles are universal and should be followed in the clubhouses all over the

world. Nevertheless, the legal issues and cultural environment automatically affect the way the principles and standards are applied in each clubhouse. Therefore each clubhouse is a unique community which aims to follow the basic rules and principles of clubhouse. (Hietala-Paalamaa, Hujanen, et al. 2009, 7-9.)

2.3 Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse

Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse is part of Helsinki Clubhouse association and was established as its own unit in 2009. Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse aims to follow the universal clubhouse principles and standards and the activities are based on them. The clubhouse membership is directed to all citizens of Helsinki who have or have had a mental illness. There is four employed workers in the community. The clubhouse being fairly new, the number of members is much less comparing to the clubhouse in Sörnäinen, Helsinki with whom Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse forms the association.

The main activity in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse is the work ordered day where the members have a possibility to choose whether they want to work in kitchen, in reception or in administration. Each member has a key worker with whom they can discuss and plan personal goals concerning accommodation, education and employment, relationships and any vital issues in life. There has been established a great number of other activities in the clubhouse such as a free time club, swimming club, jogging club, English club and a life style club. It also offers a possibility for a transitional employment for the members who are interested. (Itä-Helsingin Klubitälo.)

2.4 Standards

International Center for Clubhouse Development is a background community of the clubhouses which develops and researches the clubhouse communities. The clubhouses are monitored by the international standards which define issues concerning the clubhouse activities and membership. The standards were established to define the essence and the rules of the clubhouse which became necessary when clubhouses were

founded in different countries. The standards express the rights of the clubhouse members and serve as an ethical guide for the employees. (Pöyhönen 2003, 15.)

The standards are updated after every two years and changes are made according to the need. The standards are divided in different themes which discuss the essential elements in clubhouse such as the membership, the premises, the work ordered day, employment and training. (Klubitalotoiminnan kansainväliset standardit.)

3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

This chapter discusses the main concepts of the thesis. The concepts are defined based on the literature and their connection to the thesis is explained. The chapter is divided in four parts. The first three chapters discuss therapeutic communities, peer support and voluntarism. The fourth part consists of community development and some of its key elements: anti-oppressive practice, empowerment and equality.

3.1 Therapeutic communities

Community is a term used on a general level to describe groups. Communities can be categorized based on their purposes and their level of interaction. Oxford Dictionary defines community as:

“all the people who live in a particular area, country etc. when talked about as a group, a group of people who share the same religion, race, job etc., the feeling of sharing things and belonging to a group in the place where you live” (Oxford Dictionary).

In this thesis clubhouse is considered a community which consists of individuals who share something and who have something in common. In clubhouse the uniting factor is a mental health diagnoses, however the members of the clubhouse might be united by

other factors as well.

Nearly all the people live in communities. Community offers safety in the form of group for an individual. The group can facilitate an individual in being aware of his or her environment in new ways. Timo Airaksinen (1981) describes community as the societal collectivity. He also argues that community is a decision-maker which requires at least some common values and voices by the individuals. Community is a unity formed by the relations among individuals and therefore, a social system. (Parviainen & Pelkonen 1998, 39-40.)

In addition to being a community, Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse is considered having some elements of therapeutic communities. The ideology of therapeutic communities concludes inclusive decision-making and communal evaluation in terms of the community's development (Pöyhönen 2003, 55). The following paragraph explains the idea of therapeutic communities more detailed.

Therapeutic communities have been researched by Robert Rapoport (1960) who conducted a study on the essence of therapeutic communities. According to Rapoport there are five themes which summarize the main concepts of therapeutic communities. These concepts form the basis for understanding therapeutic communities nowadays. Firstly, *democratization* means sharing the power among the members of the therapeutic community. The hierarchical relationships between the staff and the service users decrease while they work together in their community. Everyone shall participate in the decision-making and have their voice heard. *Acceptance* refers to the capacity to tolerate other people's behavior and differences in the community. It is also important to handle the anxiety which may arise in others when one member of the community behaves in a deviant way. (Dickey, Ware 2008, 106.)

Communalism stands for the assumption that each member of the community will work for the community's welfare. The theory of therapeutic community believes that while dealing with others and sharing the everyday life experiences with other members of the community, the likeliness of personal growth and rehabilitation will increase. The mutual emotional support among the members of the community is to help in the

healing process. *Reality confrontation* is an important theme concerning the personal growth in the community. When living in the community, the members gain learning experiences of interacting with others and reflecting their own behavior via others. That way, they become more aware of their own actions and responsibility in the community. Last, *reciprocal relationships* based on respect and trust are established in the community. The relationships among the members strengthen when difficulties are faced and overcome. (Dickey, Ware 2008, 106.)

Clubhouse is considered one type of therapeutic community in this thesis because it applies some of the main elements of therapeutic communities. Sharing the power among the members and the employees of the clubhouse takes place in the weekly house meetings where decisions are made concerning the issues of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. Communalism and the participation to the community's activities are typical to clubhouses where the members are given the opportunity to participate in the work ordered day. Relationships, more or less reciprocal, are established among the members of clubhouse which is considered typical to therapeutic communities according to Rapoport (1960).

3.2 Peer support

The clubhouse model supports the formation of peer relations among the members of the clubhouse, while the members interact with each other in the community. In this thesis peer support refers to the mutual positive relations among the community members. Peer support can be defined as social emotional support, which is mutually offered or provided by people who share a similar condition, such as a certain mental health condition, to others who share the same condition to bring about a personal or social change. (Gartner & Riessman 1982).

The idea of peer support comes from the belief that meaningful interpersonal relationships and a shared sense of community are the basis for the process of rehabilitation. Peer support is typically connected with the mutual and nonhierarchical interaction of people who have had same type of struggles in life. Via peer support

people have an opportunity for being active participants in their own recovery or rehabilitation instead of being passive consumers of the mental health system. (Adame & Leitner 2008, 148.)

Peer support alternatives emphasize the role of relationships at the core of the rehabilitation process. Exchange of experiences among the people help to gain an understanding atmosphere, and the relationships are based on the assumption that neither person is the expert and the mutually supportive relationships provide a meaningful connection. (Mead & Hilton 2003, 88). The friendship research tradition examines the relationship between two individuals who are friends. The nature and the quality of the friendship are assessed based on the levels of companionship, help and the feeling of being respected. The friendships which are considered high quality friendships have been examined of having positive effects on the individuals. Depending on the level of quality of the peer relationship, the friendship can have certain positive or negative effects on the individual. (Kiuru 2008, 18.)

While being a supporter and receiving support from others, a person may have the possibility to develop a new sense of self-dignity as their experiences are appreciated in a new way. People may also dialogically improve the traditionally oppressed role of a mental health patient, with other survivors they may overcome the feelings of incompetence and worthlessness and increase the control of their own lives. (McLean 1995, 1059.)

In the context of peer support, people have the possibility to share similar life experiences, which may decrease feelings of social isolation, increase people's social networks and strengthen the sense of community. The rise of community-based and peer support alternatives in the traditional mental health services has given new sights to a client-centred approach where the emphasis is on the needs of the rehabilitee. Many different types of organizations and communities work under the principles of peer support. Clubhouse is one of the contemporary communities which is characterized by the presence of peer support. (Adame & Leitner 2008, 150.)

3.3 Voluntarism

Majority of the literature regarding voluntarism concentrates on voluntarism as doing something without wanting to be paid for it. In this research voluntarism is understood as doing something with a free will, because it is discussed in such way in the clubhouse standards.

The Oxford dictionary defines voluntary as:

“done willingly, not because you are forced” and “done by people who choose to do it without being paid”(Oxford dictionary).

Human action is explained by focusing on the interaction between intellect and will. These basic factors are also at the core of explaining the freedom of human actions. Human beings act freely in terms of the power they possess. Therefore, according to this theory, people act freely because of the given power which performs its activity freely in them. Free choice or free decision forms the power which enables people to act freely. Free human action is a basis for explaining voluntarism and its nature. Ethical voluntarism consists of the ideas that the will is superior to intellect and the freedom of action derives from the will. (McCluskey 2001, 185, 188.)

As stated in the previous paragraph, the free will directs people to voluntarism. The principle of voluntarism in clubhouses derives from the universal clubhouse standards and it offers to the members the freedom to choose what they want to do in the clubhouse communities and how much they want to participate in the activities.

Voluntarism is opposed by the concept of responsibility in this thesis. Therefore a model to explain the level of responsibility in individuals and communities is presented in this chapter. The level of responsibility in an individual and in a community has been described via different levels of autonomy as presented in figure 1. Autonomy refers to inner independency which serves as a basis for individuals and communities in a responsible practice. An individual or a community can have an autonomy in themselves without being conscious about their self determination and communality.

A community can also have an autonomy for itself when it is highly conscious of its self determination which is routinized in its daily practices. People are not able to be free unless if they are able to form their own models of communality. Respectively, the community should continuously be aware and monitor the ways by which it enables personal freedom in the community. (Bauman 1999, 81, 107.)

	Closed autonomy	Open autonomy
Individual	Surviving on one's own. An isolated individual.	Responsibility of others. An ethical subject.
Community	Surviving in the community. "A team".	A communal responsibility. "Helping hands".

FIGURE 1: Autonomy as a closed and open system (Hyväri 2001, 254). Translated by Tiina Louko.

The figure 1 demonstrates the different levels of autonomy which individuals and communities have in relation to their participation in the community. In the model of closed autonomy the independency is based on the separation from others, not on the relation with others. Ensuring the personal freedom of an individual does not always safeguard participation in the communities. The closed autonomy consists of individuals

who are bind together by a common interest or a beneficial matter. Open autonomy

stands for individuals who, by encountering others, become responsible of others. On a community level it means different forms of communal responsibilities which are formed by autonomous individuals and their dialogue. The responsibility of others includes a moral aspect. The community does not bring about the morality but the moral matters dwell in the community. The open autonomy highlights membership, unity and participation. The conditions for the freedom depend on the membership. Members belong to the community by involving and being committed to its values. The level of autonomy and freedom of the community members is connected with the amount of participation and activity in the community. (Hyväri 254-258, 2001.)

3.4 Key concepts of community development

This chapter explains the core ideas of community development and discusses more detailed about anti-discriminatory practice, empowerment and equality. Moreover, the connection of those concepts to the thesis is explained in the following sections.

3.4.1 Community development

Community development can refer to an occupation or a way of working with communities. The main aim is to construct communities on the basis of justice, equality and mutual respect. Community development includes challenging the positions of the power holders and the ordinary people so that everyone can participate the issues which have an effect on their lives. It involves a belief that in every community there are resources, such as knowledge and experience, which the community can take advantage of in creating collective action to achieve the communities' desired goals. The professionals working on the field of community development support the community members in learning new skills, and by enabling people to act together, professionals promote social inclusion and equality. Community development involves working with individuals and affecting communities' positions on the larger societal level. (Community Development Exchange.)

In this thesis community development is considered a way of working with the communities. The suggestions for developing the clubhouse community in the thesis have an aim of promoting social justice and equality, like mentioned in the previous paragraph by Community Development Exchange. Moreover, in this thesis community development is understood as a cooperation between the employees and the members of the clubhouse community, who act together for reaching their desired goals.

Community development is committed to a certain set of values. Community development aims to challenge discriminatory practices and inequalities on the structural level. Its basic belief is that every person is unique and each person is worthy and important, and therefore deserves the same amount of respect and recognition. Community development has a goal of increasing social justice by tackling social exclusion, discrimination and inequality. One of its main elements is to work with and support groups of people to help them to increase their awareness, skills and confidence so that they can become reflective thinkers and identify matters which can be challenged through collective action. Community development includes the empowerment of individuals and communities, by taking advantage of the strengths of the community to reach the desired changes. Community development practice is supposed to be a collective process where the participants are able to learn by reflecting on the experiences. (Community Development Exchange.)

In this thesis community development is understood similarly as described by Community Development Exchange. Through this research I hope to raise the awareness of the community members in clubhouse. They can reflect the results of the thesis and decide the most appropriate ways for them to deal with the issues raised by the research material. The reflexion on the results of this study should take place inclusively and by respecting everyone's opinion, as the principles of community development demand.

3.4.2 Anti-discriminatory practice

Anti-discriminatory practice refers to an approach which aims to decrease or eliminate discrimination and oppression, in particularly concerning sexism, racism, ageing and disabilism in addition to other forms of oppression and discrimination. (Thompson 2006, 40). In this research anti-discriminatory practice refers to eliminating the oppressive and discriminatory practices towards mental health rehabilitees, especially the members of clubhouse.

On the basis of the research material anti-discriminatory practice is considered important in this thesis. Moreover, community development includes the use of anti-discriminatory principles, therefore anti-discriminatory practice is part of this thesis in presenting suggestions for further development. In this research anti-discriminatory practice refers to reducing the oppression on institutional and community level. According to Thompson (2006) social work practitioners are in a position of exercising power over and with the service users. Therefore it is inevitable that some sort of discrimination and oppression occurs in their practice, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Anti-discriminatory practice seeks to undermine discrimination from our own customs and challenge the customs of others and the institutional structures which surrounds us. (Thompson 2006, 40, 41.)

Discrimination is defined as identifying a difference. As such it does not necessarily refer to a negative context. However, the term becomes unjust when the identification of differences is used as a basis for an unfair treatment. The differences between people are not considered as positive but they become a reason to disadvantage certain people or groups of people. Via the process of considering some people different, they receive inhuman or insulting treatment and are therefore oppressed. (Thompson 2006, 12, 13.)

Anti-oppressive ethics are often discussed in the same context with anti-discriminatory practice. The purpose of anti-oppressive ethics is to provide tools and direction in order to overcome oppressive and discriminatory aspects of human relationships. Although ethics is generally associated with a responsibility for behaviour on a personal level, ethics become under a critical reflexion in situations where inequalities or oppression

occurs. Anti-oppressive ethics emphasizes the forms of oppression on a micro level in the everyday life situations, and connects it with the wider organisational and structural levels. (Clifford & Burke 2009, 16, 17.)

3.4.3 Empowerment

Empowerment is generally connected with the clubhouses because they are considered places where the empowerment of mental health rehabilitees can increase. During my practical placement I observed that the term empowerment is present in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. Nevertheless, in this study it is explained more detailed how the community members define it in their community. The following paragraphs describe empowerment based on the literature in order to present the generally understood meaning of the concept.

The psychological model of empowerment argues that empowerment is a consequence of a personal growth. Rodgers (1961) argues that the growth is achieved by forming relationships at the core of which are genuineness, empathy and positive feedback. Power and self-confidence increase in individuals through the interaction with others and therefore people become empowered. The psychological model highlights the importance of a professional relationship between the practitioner and the service user. In order to facilitate the empowerment of the service user, the practitioner should work with a person centred approach and address positive interaction, such as trust, respect and equality, with the service user. To be purely empowering, this interaction should affect the strengths and the resources of the service user and therefore increase and strengthen the personal growth. (Masterson & Owen 2006, 23, 26-27.)

The contemporary theories concerning empowerment claim that individuals are specialists in their own lives and they know what is the best for them. According to Siitonen (1999) the concept of empowerment refers to an inner strength which increases when the self-dignity of a person is supported while being in interaction with others. Even a small amount of increasing strength can produce great amount of energy for growth and learning. The consequences of empowerment are generally a higher self esteem, a capacity to set and reach goals, an increased control over one's own life, and a

hopeful attitude towards the future. (Siitonen 1999.)

Räsänen (2006) argues that empowerment is about a battle for a worthy life and it requires a critical self-reflection by the individuals, organizations and societies. According to Räsänen it is vital to gain an understanding of what is real and what is imaginary. Ethical reflection and a capacity to reflect on our values, choices and their consequences become important matters in empowerment. (Räsänen 2006.)

It is claimed that the individuals and communities define the meaning of empowerment to themselves; therefore the term empowerment should not be defined very detailed in the literature. In this thesis space is given for the clubhouse community to describe their understanding of empowerment as a term. Empowerment is generally connected with power. However, it is necessary to distinguish between “power over” and “power with” someone. Power with someone refers to the power which takes place in a collective human interaction. The importance of protecting human dignity should be always taken into consideration when discussing empowerment. Being an object of measures creates a dependency relation between the practitioners and the individual. Practitioners are often the professionals working in the field of social work and individuals are the service users. Moreover the measure practitioners have an increased power over others and the individual’s space becomes less. In order to become empowered, it is necessary for an individual to have personal space for recognizing the increased self-dignity which enhances the development of collective power. The interests of individuals and communities should be in balance. Empowerment is at the same time a personal and collective process. (Heikkilä & Heikkilä 2005, 31-33.)

Empowerment can be discussed at an individual, communal, organizational, national and international level. In this thesis, empowerment is discussed at communal and at individual level. Empowerment can be considered an increased control over one’s inner life when an individual or community is aware of their situation, capable of taking decisions and capable of having a critical reflection on who has the power over oneself. According to Hogan (2000) empowerment enables possibilities and capacities for finding creative alternatives in order to solve the problems and success. Empowerment also means taking responsibility of one’s own life and development. Empowerment increases self-awareness of one’s personal values and therefore the values become an

important factor in directing the individual. (Hogan 2000.)

Changes are inevitable part of life. However, the resources of individuals and groups are consumed by changes. When a person or a group is faced by too big amount of changes at a time, the level of stress increases. The stress may cause physical, psychological and behavioral disorders. The negative experiences in life decrease the level of control and self-awareness in an individual. The changes in life displace the resources individuals and groups have if not having the needed emotional and concrete support in surviving in the everyday life. (Fitzsimons & Fuller 2002.)

Referring to the previous paragraph, in this study clubhouse is considered a place where concrete and emotional support is offered for the individuals who have faced changes, for instance a mental health diagnoses, in their lives. Among other factors, the concrete and emotional support consists of assisting the members to become empowered.

The concept of empowerment includes a view that individuals and communities have the capacity to tackle the changes actively. Individuals have the resources to affect their way of reacting in changes by controlling their own actions. The reality consists of everyday life and short term decisions. Changes offer a possibility for new directions in life. Activization promotes the welfare of individuals and increases the experiences of success and participation. The empowerment of individuals increases in community via transferred experiences and knowledge. (Tapaninen, Kauppinen, Kivinen, Kotilainen, Kurenniemi, Pajukoski 2002.)

3.4.4 Equality

Equality is a relationship, of some kind, between two or more people or a group of people, concerning some aspect of those people's lives. Equality can be referred to either individuals or sometimes to groups. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that "All human being are born free and equal in dignity and rights" refers to individuals. However, equality is often discussed in context of groups such as equality between men and women. Equality is a challenging concept to define because people can be equal in several different ways. One way to describe equality is to have a case

where two individuals or groups have the same amount of something, such as income or respect. The goals of equality are met to a certain extent when everyone's basic needs are covered. Thus, equality can be discussed in terms of groups or individuals and it can refer to many different dimensions of people's lives, however, always having the similar basic idea of treating people as equals. (Baker, Lynch, Cantillon, Walsh 2004, 21-22.)

In the context of this study, equality is referred to the basic idea of treating people as equals regardless of the differences. Basic equality is formed by the idea that at the very basic level each individual is equally worth and important, and therefore equally worthy of respect and value. It is believed that every human being deserves some minimum level of concern and respect which reflects their human dignity. The idea of basic equality includes prohibitions against inhuman treatment, protection against violence and at least some commitment to meeting people's basic needs. (Baker et al. 2004, 23.)

Basic equality refers to people's general well-being. It is challenging to define what is well-being because it is culturally related and varies from one person to another. Nevertheless, some main factors have been combined to describe the well-being or quality of life of most of the people. These dimensions of equality discussed in the following paragraph are *respect and recognition*, *resources*, *love and care*, and *power*. (Baker et al. 2004, 24.)

Respect and recognition stand for the equal status of all citizens and respecting the differences of individuals and groups when they do not harm the basic rights of individuals. In the public sphere people should relate to each other as citizens of a common society regardless of differences in class, gender, ethnicity and other matters. Respectively, the values of others should be tolerated even if not respected or understood. Each citizen should have an equal status in the society even if having differences in the social esteem. Too little emphasis is usually given for the basic human needs of *love, care and solidarity*. Generally human beings need satisfying and trustable relationships with others in order to live even a minimally decent life. The societies either promote or hinder these basic human needs to be met in people's lives. *Power* relations refer to the basic civil and personal rights in the society. The rights include equality before the law, freedom of movement, the right to own property, freedom of

thought and religion, freedom of opinion and association. How these rules are applied, varies from one country to another. (Baker et al. 2004, 25-28.)

In this thesis the emphasis is given to the aspects related with the previously mentioned dimensions of equality. In the findings chapter equality is explained further in terms of equal decision-making which is connected with the levels of power, and in terms of equality in the public sphere in particularly with professionals working with mental health rehabilitees.

The main assumption is that there will always be inequalities between people concerning their status, resources or power. The idea of equality is to provide some basis for managing the inequalities and understanding their existence. Equal opportunities demand people not to be advantaged or discriminated due to their social background and their own abilities and efforts should be what matters. (Baker et al. 2004, 25.)

4 RESEARCH PROCESS

This chapter presents the research process. Firstly, the research is discussed as a qualitative research. Furthermore, the chapter describes the research methods which are interviews and observation, the data collecting and the analysis. The chapter ends with the description of research ethics, validity and limitations.

4.1 Qualitative research

This study is a qualitative research because it describes certain phenomena in a detailed way. According to Holliday in order to understand human affairs it is necessary to look deep into the quality of social life in qualitative research (Holliday 2007, 6).

I have applied aspects of phenomenographic research in this thesis. Marton & Booth

(1997) define the purpose of phenomenography as finding out how people experience the world and the different phenomena (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 168). In this thesis I aimed at finding out how the members of the clubhouse community experience and describe the different concepts in their community. According to Marton & Booth (1997) the researcher has planned the purpose of the research beforehand; however the analysis directs and brings up new dimensions to the research. The research material can be analysed from the both of view of individuals or a community, or both (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 169.)

I planned the interview themes before conducting the interviews; nevertheless the interviews brought up new concepts which deepened the results. As typical in phenomenographic research, the community and the experiences of its members are at the center of the analysis in this thesis. I researched a certain community from the point of view of the principles and terms which are used in the context of that community. The materials of the research raised new themes which means that space was given to the interviewees to direct the course of the research. For instance, the matter of responsibility was brought up in the research material. Therefore, the interviewees have directed the research in emphasizing certain specific themes.

4.2 Research methods

I have used interviews and observation as methods for collecting the data in the thesis. In the following sections they are explained more detailed.

4.2.1 Interviews

Interviews were used as a method in finding out the opinions and statements of the people in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse concerning the topics discussed in the thesis. I conducted both, individual and group interviews with the members and employees of clubhouse.

I decided to form half-structured interviews in order to direct the interviews to some extent but at the same time giving a chance for the interviewees to suggest new topics and ideas to the interviews. Fielding (1993) states that in half-structured interview the questions are the same for each interviewee but the interviewer can decide in which order he or she asks the questions. Moreover, according to Eskola & Suoranta (1998) half-structured interview does not include any ready-made options or answer but the interviewees can answer by using their own words. Robson (1995) adds that the interviewee has planned the questions beforehand but in the interview situation the interviewee can change the set of words in the questions. The basis of half-structured interview is that some parts of the interview are planned beforehand and some not. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 47.)

I planned the interviews according to certain themes which is called thematic interview. Thematic interview is one type of half-structured interview. Thematic interview focuses on certain themes which are discussed in the interview situation. The basic belief is that the experiences, thoughts, feelings and beliefs of people can be researched via this research method. Thematic interviews aim to get some type of idea of the interviewees' experiences and definitions of different situations. The primary element in thematic interviews is that the interviews proceed according to certain main themes. Thematic interviews point out the importance of the interpretations and meanings of the interviewees. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 47, 48.)

4.2.2 Observation

Observation helps to build an understanding of the environment and the way how it is seen and experienced. Observation as a research methods aims to collect data about different factors of a certain phenomena. All our senses are required to receive the information which is then processed in our thinking. Observation can be used as a method when observing behaviour and lingual expressions. The objective of the observation might be either conscious or unconscious of being observed. (Aaltola & Valli 2001, 124.)

I used observation as a method in the thesis for deepening my understanding on the topics of the thesis and for collecting data. I was observing at the same time as a participant observer and as a student in clubhouse while having my practical placement there in Spring 2010. It is typical that the researcher observes the phenomena through his or her role in the research environment. The objective of the observation can be a community with all its social and cultural dimensions (Aaltola & Valli 2001, 124). I was observing the clubhouse community with the main aim of increasing my knowledge on the research environment and for collecting data which can support me in analysing the interview results.

Scientific observation varies from very detailed and systematic observation to observing while conducting an interview (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 37). As I was observing during my practical placement, the observation was fairly constant and intensive. I wrote a learning diary, which includes some of the observation results. However, in this thesis I refer several times to my own experience and observation in clubhouse which was not documented during the practical placement.

4.3 Collecting the data

The data collection started on 8th of March 2010 when starting my practical placement in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. The placement ended on 16th of April 2010. During the placement I was observing through my role as a student and writing my learning diary. I participated several free time activities, weekly house meetings and a few private discussions between an employee and a member. Mainly, I worked with the members in different work units and participated the daily activities in clubhouse. My observation included several discussions with the members and with the employees.

After finishing the placement, the topic of this thesis was actually formed. The research questions were: how is the clubhouse community described by its members from the aspects of peer support, empowerment, equality and voluntarism, how the concepts are understood in a certain context, what type of new dimensions they arise and how they can be used for developing the community. I wanted to research the clubhouse community from the point of view of their own principles and the commonly used terms

regarding mental health rehabilitation. I formed the interviews around five main themes: community, empowerment, peer support, equality and voluntarism. Equality and voluntarism are written in the clubhouse standards and they are general principles in the clubhouse model. Moreover, I considered peer support and empowerment interesting topics because they are discussed in the clubhouse context. I wanted to research how the people of the community define and describe the commonly used terms in their community. Each theme of the interviews was formed by a few major questions of how the concept, for instance empowerment, is defined, what is the meaning of the concept in their community and how the concept supports the rehabilitation of the members.

In May 2010 I started to collect the interviews in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. First, I conducted interviews with the four employees. Each one of them was interviewed individually and the interviews were recorded with a tape recorder. The duration of the interviews varied from approximately half an hour to more than one hour. Moreover, I conducted the first group interview with four members of the clubhouse in the beginning of June 2010. There was a poster on the wall for finding voluntary interviewees in clubhouse so the interviewees were found that way. The first group interview consisted of two males and two females. The interview was arranged in an empty room and the participants were myself and the four interviewed members. This interview was also recorded with a tape recorder. I emphasized the purpose and the confidentiality of the interviews before starting to conduct them with the members.

When transcribing the tapes and starting the analysis of the interviews, I noticed a need for one more group interview with the members. The material of the first group interview raised interesting aspects concerning peer support and voluntarism. Therefore it was necessary to conduct further questions in relation to those themes. The second group interview was conducted with three members in August 2010. The interview concluded two main themes: the concept of peer support, and voluntarism and responsibility. One of the interviewees had participated the previous group interview conducted in June and the two were new interviewees. This group interview was arranged similarly as the previous one, using a tape recorder. The duration of the group interview was approximately half an hour and the interviewees consisted of two males and one female.

4.4 Analysing the data

I conducted a qualitative research and therefore have used a qualitative analysing method. In this thesis the analysis is based on thematizing. I formed the themes for the analysis on the basis of the interview themes. Nevertheless, new themes arose from the interviews which were added to the analysis. Hirsjärvi & Hurme explain thematizing in the analysis as collecting such characteristics which occur several times in the interviews. The assumption is that at least those themes which were planned for the interviews, will arise. However, it is common that new themes are found on the basis of the interviewees' statements. The themes are based on the researcher's interpretation regarding the interviews. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010, 173.)

The researched phenomena can be compared to opposite phenomena in order to reach more dimension for the analysis. It is also useful to find broad umbrella concepts of which the researched phenomena can represent an example (Alasuutari 1995, 201). I used comparison (voluntarism and responsibility) and the connection of a concept to a wider phenomena (the concept of peer support and anti-discriminatory practice) in analysing the results. The interview results and the analysis is combined in the "findings" section of the thesis. That section concludes the interview results, the observation results, my own interpretations and the connection of the themes to theory.

Typically it is challenging for qualitative research to form generalisations because the interpretations are detailed. Qualitative research rather aims to bring up new dimensions to previous knowledge and to increase the knowledge concerning a specific phenomena. (Alasuutari 1995, 206). Similarly, I did not use generalisations in the analysis but rather, I added new information and perspective concerning the researched community. Qualitative analysis emphasizes the exceptions and differences between people or the researched phenomena (Alasuutari 1995, 33). When analysing the interview results, I separated the differences in the opinions of the interviewees and aimed at interpreting those differences.

4.5 Ethics, validity and limitations

This chapter focuses on the ethical practice during the research process. Furthermore, the practices which support the validity of the thesis and the limitations of this study are discussed. Before starting to collect the research material, I applied for a research permission from the board of clubhouse. Once having the research permission, I started to conduct the interviews.

In terms of research, confidentiality refers to the information on individuals and the promises given regarding that information. The promises concerning the material and its purpose of use should be agreed already before the data collecting. (Kuula 2006, 64). As Kuula discussed, I also considered essential to ensure the confidentiality of the research material. Before starting the interviews, I explained to the interviewees the purpose of the interviews and the contents of the interview topics. I also emphasized the fact that the interviews are interpreted as anonymous. According to Kuula it is important to inform the interviewees concerning the duration and the possible recording or note taking methods used in the interviews. (Kuula 2006, 106, 107). Similarly, I made sure the interviewees' agreement on recording the interviews and informed them on the estimated time which the interviews would take. In the clubhouse context I considered important to make the participation to the interviews voluntary and to ensure that no one is pressed to participate.

I conducted the interviews with sensitivity concerning the discussed topics. The themes did not include any personal questions. Moreover, I respected the interviewees gestures and hints considering the duration of the interviews. I decided to end the group interviews when one of the interviewees expressed his willingness to end the interview.

Holliday argues the importance for a researcher to find his or her own voice in the research process. (Holliday 2007, 114). I understand that my background and my previous knowledge about clubhouse affected my way of planning the interviews, conducting them and interpreting the data. Even I aimed at bringing the voice of the interviewees in the results, it is inevitable that my own way of understanding clubhouse affected the results of this research.

As for other limitations to this study I consider the fact that the interview themes were planned before the interviews. Obviously, the themes directed the interview situations and affected the answers by the interviewees. In the group interviews, the presence of other interviewees might have affected the way the interviewees answered. It is likely that they would have answered in somewhat different way had they been interviewed individually. In terms of the observation material, some of the material is documented; however some of the material is based on my memories and the way I understand clubhouse.

5 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results and the analysis of the interviews and my observation. The results are divided in four parts. The first part “anti-discriminatory aspects” discusses the results from the point of view of peer support and anti-discriminatory practice. The second part “strengthening self-awareness and self-dignity” concludes the research results in terms of voluntarism and responsibility, and empowerment. The third and fourth section indicate the results in terms of equality and suggestions for community development.

5.1 Anti-discriminatory aspects

This chapter consists of the results concerning peer support and anti-discriminatory practice. Peer support and its relation to “alike support” is discussed in a reflexive way. Furthermore, the chapter discusses issues related with anti-discriminatory practice on the basis of the results.

5.1.1 The concept of peer support

Based on the interviews, peer support is frequently present in clubhouse. According to an employee and a member, peer support in clubhouse is described as similar experiences of people with different backgrounds and different circumstances. Moreover, Copeland & Mead argue peer support not being similar to clinical help, nor is it only about being friends. Peer support can help people to understand each other because they have had similar life experiences. It can also be a support in developing new patterns, surviving in challenges and building mutually valuable relationships. (Copeland & Mead 2004.)

One of the interviewees stated that the concept of peer support is connected to categorization:

It comes to my mind that people are put into a certain category. It has a taste of categorization.

Categorization is a way of classifying people in the society based on characteristics which are considered typical or natural to each member of the category. Furthermore, social identities are built according to the pre-assumptions which people have about other people. Having a pre-knowledge or assumption of the person, people build a certain idea about the person based on the category which the person is considered to belong. Thus the person is not seen as a whole individual but they are limited to the category which they are considered. Classifying a person to an anticipated category is stigmatization. The term stigma has discrediting elements in it. (Goffman 1990, 11-13.)

The interviewee felt that peer support classifies the mental health rehabilitees as a homogenous group leaving out the uniqueness of each individual. The interviewee argued that the term peer support considers the members of clubhouse primarily as peers who are in the same situation or who understand each other. Being peers, belonging to the same category of peers, does not have an emphasis on the individual differences and uniqueness. On the basis of my observation being part of the clubhouse community increases the critical reflection of the members concerning their own issues. As stated in this chapter, the peer relations take place in different forms in clubhouse,

not only between the employees and members. Therefore, the interviewee considering peer support categorizing might be affected by the idea that peer support is having different dimensions in clubhouse. In my opinion, it is also a sign of an atmosphere where it is safe to present different, even criticizing, opinions.

The same interviewee who argued peer support not being an appropriate word, suggested “alike support” to be somewhat more correct term. However, the interviewee felt that “alike support” has to some extent the similar problem of categorization. The interviewee explained that even if mental health rehabilitees have a similar diagnoses, their characters can be totally different. Thus, according to the interviewee mental health rehabilitatees can be alike but not similar in terms of experiences and background. The term “alike support” is translated by me from the Finnish word “kaltaistuki”. I considered “alike support” to describe the meaning of “kaltaisuus” in the most appropriate way in order to present the expression of the interviewee.

Contravertially, another interviewee felt that “alike support” is more connected with friendship. The interviewee described likeness being with someone such as a friend or a brother with whom one can have similarities, such as similar hobbies, regardless of the diagnoses or the illness. Alike support refers to the descriptions of friendship in the literature. Friendship is connected with the particular desire to interact with the other person, the ability to maintain the relationship and mutuality. (Snell & Janney 2000, 2). One of the interviewees describes “alike support”:

In my opinion, the fact that you are a mental health rehabilitee is not sufficient for receiving “alike support”.. but something more is required in “alike support”.. that you match and get along with that person.

According to the interviewees “alike support” requires “matching” and “getting along” with the other person. The results show that “alike support” is a step to a more deep relationship from peer support. The results show that meanwhile “alike support” was linked with similarities or shared interests between the persons, the interviewees felt that peer support was associated with similar experiences. Based on my observation, both type of relationships are present in clubhouse. There are members who discuss with each other on a regular basis and who spend time together outside the clubhouse hours. That would, in my opinion, refer to “alike support” because there is the presence

of similar experiences due to illness but also matching and friendship which is not necessarily required in peer support according to this study. Peer relations are connected with the discussions and nonverbal peer support which takes place within the premises of clubhouse as discussed in this chapter. One member can support and encourage another member without having a deeper attachment to that person in the community.

The friendship research tradition examines the relationship between two individuals who are friends. The nature and the quality of the friendship are assessed based on the levels of companionship, help and the feeling of being respected. The friendships which are considered high quality friendships have been examined of having positive effects on the individuals. Depending on the level of quality of the peer relationship, the friendship can have certain positive or negative effects on the individual. (Kiuru 2008, 18.)

The research material indicates that the concepts of peer support and “alike support” have a different significance in the clubhouse community. Referring to the research of friendships having different effects on the individual as a consequence of its level of quality, it can be argued that peer support and “alike support” are peer relationships with different levels of quality.

Based on the interviews peer support is a relationship of individuals with similar experiences however having a tone of categorization. Moreover, “alike support” is described as a relationship where the individuals have something in common and as a more deep level relationship comparing to peer support. Having differences in the level of quality, peer support and “alike support” can be said to have different effects on the individual. In my opinion, peer support and “alike support” respond to different needs of the members. As discussed, “alike support” includes elements of friendship which has an effect on the social life of the members. A member, whose need is to widen his or her social networks and yet to share experiences with someone who has similar experiences, is benefited by “alike support”.

According to the interviewees peer support is visible in different forms; peer support between the employed workers and the members of clubhouse as an equal work

community, peer support among the employed workers and peer support among the members. An interviewee explained that peer support between the employees and members occurs for instance when members pass useful methods for rehabilitation to the employed workers who can benefit from the members' experiences in their own work practice. I think that way the members have an effect on the professional growth of the employees because the members opinions are taken seriously and used for increasing the knowledge of the employees.

The interviewee's statement supports my observation that the rehabilitees are considered specialists of their own life situation in clubhouse. Therefore the members are believed to know what is useful and functioning for them in terms of rehabilitation. I think this type of peer relationship is not only beneficial for the employees who increase their knowledge, but also for the members who are supported by employees whose knowledge is shaped by practical experiences of the members. It can be argued that the members have, whether consciously or unconsciously, a possibility to develop the professional knowledge of the employees.

One member brought out the necessity of having clear minded support, whether in an interaction with other rehabilitees or with the employees. The member's view reveals that the core need of that member is to have support which is clear or logical. According to my experience in clubhouse clear minded support is needed by the members especially when they are in a dilemma situation. For instance a member, who needs assistance in deciding about something, wants to be assisted in a clear and logical way which will benefit that member in taking a decision. In my opinion, clear minded support refers to the member not primarily searching for someone who shares the similar experiences or background, but someone who can support in the everyday life issues and whose way of thinking matches to one's own.

It is difficult to define what is clear mindness because it can mean different matters to different people. Therefore, according to my experience clear mindness is a personal concept in clubhouse, and each member has their own view of what is logical and "normal". On the basis of my observation in clubhouse, a member might feel more easy to communicate and have discussions with someone than with another one. The same way a member can consider someone having more logical way of thinking than the

other one, and it is connected with one's own way of thinking. Based on the previous statement of the interviewee, a member wanting to have clear-minded support, receives that support from someone whose way of thinking matches to one's own concerning what is logical and normal.

The interviews exposed that the members offer peer support to each other, both nonverbally and verbally via discussions. Based on an interviewee's statement the nonverbal peer support refers to real life examples which one member can observe in the life of the other member. For instance when a member has succeeded in overcoming a challenge in their life, such as quitting smoking, another member might feel encouraged when observing the real life change in the other member. According to my observation, a change or progress in one member's life can rouse interest and hope in other members when seeing that it really is possible to reach goals. Hence the real life changes are motivational factors for members to achieve their own goals. The concrete examples and changes are so inevitable and visible that they include empowering elements for the whole community.

Based on the interviews the verbal peer support stands for discussions which are conscious and where one member supports or gives tips and hints which have been working in his or her life to another member of the clubhouse. My experience states that the contents of the verbal peer support are similar to that of nonverbal peer support, but they are just expressed narratively. A member may tell how he or she learned to manage the household or started a new hobby and another member might continue by asking questions and finally get inspired to do something similar in his or her own life. This type of discussions are part of the everyday coffee table conversations in clubhouse and considered "normal".

According to some interviewees clubhouse community was described as a family. I think some aspects of the family derives from the fact that usually there is sufficient space for all the people to share the same table, the community being fairly small. In my opinion, sharing the same table increases the sense of community and the feeling of belonging together which again strengthens the feeling of being like a family. Moreover, according to my observation the members are more likely to discuss their opinions and thoughts in the coffee table when the circumstances are safe and the people are few

enough to know each other. The interviewees connected safety with the freedom of being oneself and having one's opinions heard and appreciated in clubhouse. Based on my observation even the less talkative members are encouraged to express their opinions sometimes when their opinions are given a value. According to the previous interviewees, the feeling of appreciation creates safety, which encourages people to express their opinions and thoughts in the community.

5.1.2 Anti-discriminatory practice

The interview results raised up the importance of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in the clubhouse context as well as in the wider institutional context. The interviews expose that Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse includes anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in its practice.

The interviewed members emphasized the feeling of acceptance and dignity which they are shown in clubhouse, and which they do not experience in many other institutions or organizations. Clubhouse community is an environment where they are not oppressed or discriminated and moreover, they are valued and respected regardless of their background. The members' statements show that the clubhouse principle of equality is practiced in the community, not only as a norm written in the standards but in everyday situations. Based on the previous results, the employees have to be equipped with the principle of equality in order to be able to treat the members on an equal basis.

According to interviewees the power is shared among the people in the community and practiced very little bit from the hierarchical aspect in clubhouse. The share of power is also a basis in anti-discriminatory practice. The presence of anti-discriminatory practice in clubhouse derives from the universal clubhouse standards which include different principles in terms of equality and voluntarism. Moreover, according to my observation and the interviews the standards are practiced in the everyday life of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. As stated earlier, the acceptance of each member regardless of their background increases their voice in the community. The practice of anti-discriminatory principles such as equal treatment of all members facilitates the inclusion and participation of the members because they are encouraged to bring their voice up.

However, the interviews expose that even though anti-discriminatory practice is widely practiced in the clubhouse context, it is not so in the rest of the society. The example of a member asked to hide his or her diagnoses in the curriculum vitae by an employment course reveals that there is still either institutional or personal oppression practiced by the professionals working on the field. In my opinion, it is a sign of the necessity for anti-discriminatory practice and for raising awareness of it.

The research material brought up another example of some sort of institutional dilemma. The interviewees explained that several rehabilitation centers or homes set regulations for the clubhouse members to participate clubhouse certain numbers of days in a week. However, based on my observation the participation in clubhouse is voluntary on behalf of the clubhouse and voluntary participation is emphasized in the standards as well as in the daily practice. This sets a question whether it is the best interest of the service user to be obliged to participate the activities in a place which emphasizes voluntary participation and expects the activation to rise from the member's own initiative and empowerment.

The anti-oppressive view of reflexivity refers for instance to the language and assumptions used by the practitioners in dialogue with others. The professionals have to evaluate the suitability of the language and assumptions they use in relation to the particular social contexts where they operate, having a critical view to their own values. Moreover, they should consider their status and position in a reflexive way as professionals in a powerful organisation in relation to service users and colleagues. The professional's capacity to tackle inequalities and oppression depends in their capacity to "hear" the muted voices of the service users and others, especially those affected by disability or culture. (Clifford & Burke 2009, 35, 36.)

In my opinion it is vital for the professionals working on the field of social and health care to practice self-reflexion concerning their own work practice, terminology and verbal communication. As the interviews expose, there is discriminatory treatment towards mental health rehabilitees which should be tackled.

Language is an essential part of communicating ideas. Therefore it is necessary to understand the role of language in establishing and maintaining oppression and discrimination. Several words and expressions have a tone which expresses insult while others are milder and less obvious to cause a discriminatory effect. Thompson 2006, 37.)

In this study the terminology used to describe the relationships among the members arose different opinions. According to the interviews the term peer support was considered having a categorizing and therefore an oppressive element in it. Peer support is a generally and widely used term to describe the mutual relations among people who share similar experiences in different health care and social contexts. In my opinion it is such a deep established word in the everyday life of social and health care institutions and organisations, that it is difficult to notice the oppressive tone in it. However, when such a tone is noticed it should not be put aside, but looked at in a critical way.

It is questionable who can argue whether peer support is an appropriate term or not. In my opinion, the importance is that its possible negative tones are considered and taken into account when thinking about which term to use to describe the generally called peer relations. The research material shows that language and terminology can be considered an individual matter in terms of meanings of the words. The word which expresses negative elements to someone, might express something totally else to someone else. In this study, the term “peer support” expressed certain categorizing elements to an interviewee, however, to another interviewee it expressed the generally understood elements of peer support.

The anti-discriminatory practice does not aim to define which terms are the correct ones to use. However, it is necessary to gain an awareness of and a sensitivity to the discriminatory and oppressive potential of language. This should be an essential part of anti-discriminatory practice which has a tendency to underestimate the effects of language and terminology. Often, the power of language and its effect in maintaining discrimination and oppression is not understood to an extent which it should. The language we use either promotes discrimination by considering it as “normal”, or contributes to reduce the continuation of discriminatory practices. Rojek et al (1988) emphasizes the importance of language in anti-discriminatory practice when saying that

“the language which social workers are trained to use in order to free clients very often has the effect of imprisoning them anew”. This presents the importance of sensitivity to language and critical, reflexive approach to the communication we use everyday. (Thompson 2006, 38-40.)

Based on my observation, the sensitivity towards language is taken into account in clubhouse in terms of having the possibility to criticize, discuss and bring up opinions in the local clubhouse. The members opinions are taken with respect when they express their thoughts. However, the universal clubhouse standards, discussed earlier, set certain limits to the use of terminology. Based on my experience, for instance the clubhouse standards included a word to define mental health rehabilitee in an old-fashioned language which was used about people with a mental diagnoses in the past. The word was considered inappropriate by the members but because it was written in the standards, it was possible to change it only in the use of language in their own community. The commonly followed standards include certain type of terms and words which are considered natural to be used in clubhouse.

The established terminology in the standards is difficult to be changed by the clubhouse members because the International Center for Clubhouse Development monitors and evaluates the standards. According to my experience, the local clubhouse is obliged to follow the general clubhouse standards which use certain terminology. If something in the terminology is considered a need for a change, the local clubhouse has to either go through a long process by expressing their opinion to ICCD or to decide to change the use of a term in their community.

5.2 Strengthening self-awareness and self-dignity

This chapter presents the results from the aspects of voluntarism and responsibility, and empowerment. On the basis of the research material voluntarism and responsibility call for self-awareness in the community. The empowerment section highlights the impact of positive interaction to the members' self-dignity.

5.2.1 Voluntarism and responsibility

The interview results expose that a lot of positive elements are connected with voluntarism in the clubhouse. The interviewed members feel that voluntarism increases unity and equality among the members because everyone has a free choice. The freedom of choice also improves self-dignity. The members stated that they are more likely to serve the clubhouse community when they are shown respect and trust by having voluntary participation.

According to the research material, the freedom of choice, which is present basically in all the activities in clubhouse, strengthens the self-control of the members. Based on the interviews the members are in control over their own practice in clubhouse and there is no authority directing them. As discussed earlier free will is in the core of the ideology of voluntarism. The members have a free choice and the free choice can make them willingly work in the community. According to my observation, the members are also likely to work in the community when they are needed in some work task. The feeling of being necessary in something can increase the free will of wanting to work. The members stated that the voluntary attitude they have got used to in clubhouse fosters them to volunteer on free time as well. It shows that the attitude or habit of volunteering has been established in some ways in the lifestyle of those members. The members can freely experience how it feels to work on a voluntary basis in clubhouse and when it produces positive outcomes, they have the motivation to continue it on their free time.

However, a dilemma concerning voluntarism and responsibility was brought out by the interviewees. At one hand, having a freedom of choice concerning the level of activity in clubhouse empowers the clubhouse members; yet on the other hand, there is the common responsibility of taking care of the daily routines of clubhouse. According to an employee:

Voluntarism is about having a freedom of choice and having the right to refuse. But communality is also about the common responsibility of running the duties of this house.

According to the interviewed members, responsibility means doing one's best. The members think there should be responsibility to some extent but at the same time there should be a possibility to refuse participating any activities or to stay at home if sometimes they do not have the energy to come to clubhouse. They argue that the level of activity in the clubhouse should be sufficiently voluntary and should be dependent on one's state of energy and health. It was challenging for the members to define responsibility or its limits, perhaps because in my opinion, it is not an often discussed concept in clubhouse where voluntarism is more emphasized. The members referred to doing one's level best which I understand as taking all the resources in use. When the resources are used, the member has the possibility to refuse to participate or quit an activity.

The interviewed members argued that everyone should be responsible for their own behaviour, yet at the same time, include some work ethics. The members thought that it is possible to come to clubhouse just for a cup of coffee but it is also necessary that at least some members would contribute to the common good of the community. Being responsible for one's own behaviour means that the responsibility is considered a personal matter. Everyone has to be aware of their own condition and resources and act based on that. The members also highlight the fact that the community needs some people to work there in order to function. The members do not express who specifically should be contributing but according to their answers, it should be the people who feel that they are in a condition or state to work, and those who lack resources at that moment, are allowed to rest.

The interviewed employees agree with the members that the participation is voluntary and anyone can quit a work task anytime. However, the employees hope that the work task which is once started, would be completed because that is how it functions in work life. According to my experience, the employees aim to prepare the members with issues which are relevant in work life. Clubhouse is a place where those issues can be practiced and learned before entering the labour markets, where the requirements are higher than in clubhouse.

An interviewed member brought out the activization of the members via responsibilities. The member stated referring to the employees of the clubhouse:

Maybe their purpose is to activate the rehabilitee. Maybe there is that kind of thought behind it..

The statement of this interviewee shows that the member has an understanding of the reason why the employees encourage the members to be involved in one of the work tasks. However, the word “maybe” used by the interviewee expresses some guessing or insecurity towards the issue. Based on the member’s opinion, the purpose of the employees encouraging members to participate is not totally recognized or identified by some members. The explanation might be that the employees may not emphasize the reason why they encourage the members to participate in the work tasks and therefore there is unawareness of it among the members. According to my observation, the employees aim to encourage and activate the members to work so that the members can have positive experiences, such as success and learning new things. Through that way, working may become pleasant and the members might want to continue the same work task again or be encouraged to try a new one. However, the employees do not verbally highlight the encouragement being done with the purpose of activating the members.

The interviews exposed that in some cases, the rehabilitation centers or institutions set certain conditions for the rehabilitees who attend clubhouse. The rehabilitation centers may require certain number of days in a week from the rehabilitee to participate the clubhouse. It can be argued how voluntary the participation in the clubhouse is for the members in that type of case. Most of the interviewed members found these type of regulations wrong concerning voluntarism in the activities. The results show that the rehabilitation centers have their own regulations which are sometimes in contradictory with the clubhouse principles and therefore the realization of the principles is inadequate for some members.

The level of responsibility in an individual and in a community has been described via different levels of autonomy. The following figure demonstrates the levels of responsibility which individuals and communities can adopt:

	Closed autonomy	Open autonomy
Individual	Surviving on one's own. An isolated individual.	Responsibility of others. An ethical subject.
Community	Surviving in the community. "A team".	A communal responsibility. "Helping hands".

FIGURE 1: Autonomy as a closed and open system (Hyväri 2001, 254). Translated by Tiina Louko.

Figure 1 indicates that in the model of closed autonomy the independency is based on the separation from others, not on the relation with others. Ensuring the personal freedom of an individual does not always safeguard participation in the communities. The closed autonomy consists of individuals who are bind together by a common interest or a beneficial matter. Open autonomy stands for individuals who, by encountering others, become responsible of others. On a community level it means different forms of communal responsibilities which are formed by autonomous individuals and their dialogue. The responsibility of others includes a moral aspect. The community does not bring about the morality but the moral matters dwell in the community. The open autonomy highlights membership, unity and participation. The conditions for the freedom depend on the membership. Members belong to the community by involving and being committed to its values. The level of autonomy and freedom of the community members is connected with the amount of participation and activity in the community. (Hyväri 2001, 254-258.)

Based on the model of closed and open autonomy in figure 1, the clubhouse can belong to the open autonomy on a community level. According to the interviewees the common responsibility is one of the elements in clubhouse. Everyone can be responsible of the common good and of the well-being of the clubhouse community with their own actions. At the same time, the clubhouse has formed its own norms and values such as voluntarism, which gives a personal freedom for an individual to put the common responsibility aside. Thus, the members of the clubhouse may represent both type of autonomous individuals mentioned in figure 1. Some might aim to survive on their own and their main aim is perhaps not to serve for the community, but to concentrate on their own rehabilitation or the process at hand. Some might, however, take more responsibility of the community and their main aim to participate the activities is to be involved.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some members are required to attend clubhouse certain numbers of days a week by the rehabilitation centers and institutions. These requirements might affect the motivation for participating in clubhouse. Those members who are required to attend clubhouse certain days, may do it either willingly or by demand even when their level of motivation does not encourage them to participate in the work ordered day. When their motivation does not arise from their own will but from the requirements, their level of participation and taking responsibility of the community might be lower than that of those members who participate as a consequence of free will. The requirements by the rehabilitation centers may explain some of the reasons for the different levels of taking responsibility and participating, presented in figure 1.

5.2.2 Empowerment

Some of the interviewees found empowerment a difficult concept to describe. Whether it is because empowerment is not yet a very deep established term in the clubhouse context or because of some other reason why the interviewees were not familiar with it, empowerment was considered a challenging concept. However, empowerment was connected with inner energy, appreciation, self-dignity and increasing capacity in

everyday life. The increased inner energy was associated with the whole life of the member, not only the activities in the clubhouse but also on free time. Based on my experience, the activation in clubhouse may motivate the member to be active regarding household and free time activities. Therefore the energy is not limited to the Clubhouse premises but it is increased in the whole life.

Self-dignity refers to self-esteem and appreciating oneself. According to my observation, the appreciation of the members is increased by the positive feedback and acceptance from others. Positive and encouraging words are part of the daily language in clubhouse and I think they have an important effect on the growth of the self-dignity. The interviewees felt that empowerment in everyday life can be seen as a management of activities which are necessary in basic daily life, such as domestic work, free time activities, keeping in contact with friends and relatives, going out and taking care of agreed appointments. I think the increased capacity of the daily duties describes empowerment in a concrete way. According to my experience, for some members managing the daily duties is a big challenge and therefore, even a small progress in them is a sign of increasing empowerment.

According to the interviewees interaction with other people was considered an important factor in becoming empowered. Receiving feedback from others, having successful experiences, finding one's strengths and observing successful real life examples of others increase the empowerment of the members in clubhouse. The earlier discussed theory of Rodgers (1961) may explain the importance of interaction in empowerment of the members in clubhouse. While Rodgers points out the positive effect of expressing trust, equality and empathy for the service user, similarly the interviewees consider positive interaction and feedback vital. Rodgers adds that the interaction with others is a factor through which people strengthen and thus empower; the interviewees argued that the successful feelings occur when the members are in interaction with others for instance in a situation where one member receives advice from another member or from an employee.

The interviewed members found the work tasks supporting the empowerment. In clubhouse there are different work tasks with different levels of challenge. The interviewees explained that no one is supposed to have a work task which is too difficult

and help is offered by other members and the employees. According to an employee:

Well, here in Clubhouse.. empowerment means finding one's strengths and having the courage to experiment more and more challenging work tasks, and usually they succeed or atleast they succeed to some extent, and that is how one empowers, that he or she has the courage to do the work task again and the challenges increase.

Based on the previous statement, the feeling of success arises in the working situations when a member manages in completing or learning something. According to my experience, the members are encouraged to try new duties when they notice that they are capable of completing one work task. I think by the increasing self-esteem as a consequence of positive experiences, the member's level of energy and capacity increases. I think empowerment is an individual process. For some members it takes much longer than for others to find their resources and take advantage of them.

5.3 Equality

According to the interviewed members equality means that there is an absence of authority power relations in the clubhouse. The absence of authority refers to the power relations between the employees and the members. In the interviews the employees were described having a humble attitude and staying on the same level with the members. The interviewees explained that it comes visible in particularly when the employees perform the similar work tasks as the members. The interviewees feel that the equality between the members and the employees promotes empowerment and reduces miserable feelings. One of the interviewed employees states:

Equality is also visible in the safety that I, as a worker, do not need to know everything but I can assume that one of the rehabilitators is more an expert in some thing.

Based on my observation, the employees and the members are working together for their community. In that type of working situations, both are experts in something. It might be that the employee is directing the work by explaining what they are supposed to do, but the member might have more specific skill or knowledge on something that the work task includes. This way, the member and the employee are on an equal level

and there is no competition or question of having authoric power. This type of work practice challenges the position of a professional supervising the service user from up to down.

The interviewed employees found it important to admit that equality can not be fully reached in the clubhouse. Some dilemmas were found to describe the unequal points: the employees at one hand being on an equal level with the members in the work tasks but on the other hand receiving salary from the work, all the members having the possibility to affect the decision-making but only if they are present in the weekly house meetings, and the effects of one member's personality to the other such as one member staying quiet or reserved as a consequence of another member's or employee's talkativeness.

According to the clubhouse standards the members have an equal right in comparison to the employees to participate the decision-making. However, the interviews show that the difficulty occurs when planning how to collect the people together or how to help everyone to participate. In Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse the possibility for decision-making takes place in the weekly house meetings. It is questionable how equal or participatory the decision-making is when most of the members are not present in the meetings. On the basis of the research material the prerequisites for equality are present in clubhouse. The activities are planned in such a way that they would include each members needs sufficiently and that everyone would atleast have the opportunity to be included. However, the community consists of several people each one of them having their own schedule, plans and character can sometimes make it difficult to reach equality, in terms of inclusion and decision-making. In my opinion it is a collective responsibility of the community to accept the fact that equality is a challenging task to be fully reached, even if great efforts are done to reach it.

The equal relations among the people in the clubhouse community are understood similarly as Robert Rapoport (1960) explained them regarding therapeutic communities discussed earlier in this study. Rapoport's theory includes the lack of authorial relations and the share of power, which are also present in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. According to the theory the hierarchical relations decrease while the professionals and so called service users work together. Working together is the main activity in clubhouse

and according to this study, when the members and the employees exchange information and knowledge, they can achieve a nonhierarchical relationship.

Some interviewees connected equality with ensuring the same rights for all members regardless of their background, condition, race or any other features. The realization of equal treatment supports the practice of anti-discriminatory principles in clubhouse. According to my experience, the individual differences are considered a rather positive thing which may rouse interest in other members. For instance, if there is a person with a Russian background in, the other members are emphasizing the ethnicity with a positive interest. In my opinion it describes the attitudes towards differences in clubhouse, where the differences are considered part of the uniqueness of that person.

According to some employees it was a crystal clear thing that everyone is considered and taken into account equally in clubhouse. An interviewee considered important that the members do not have to hide their diagnoses of the illness in clubhouse. The interviewee described a case where a member was suggested not to reveal her diagnoses in the curriculum vitae by an employment course. According to my observation the members in Clubhouse are encouraged to reduce the stigmas concerning mental illnesses. According to my observation, their skills and resources are considered rather significant than the diagnoses. The emphasis in clubhouse is not on the mental illness but on the capacities which the members have. On the basis of the results that type of approach is an empowering factor for the members and reduces the categorization and the stigmas connected to mental diagnoses, because the members are seen as people who have a lot of capacity, resources and skills.

5.4 Community development

Based on the interviews and my observation, some issues are brought up from the aspect of community development in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. The clubhouse community can foster the development of their community by taking into account the results of this study. The interviews brought out the importance of sensitivity towards terminology. As stated earlier, peer support was connected to a categorizing tone and I think the opinion of even one interviewee should be taken with respect. I think the term

peer support could be looked at in a reflexive way by the community members and the discussion on the different terms should increase so that the community would become more aware of the terminology which they use in the daily practice. Discussions on the terminology might raise new ideas and opinions by the members which should be viewed reflectively. The discussions can take place in the coffee table which is an inclusive part of the everyday life of clubhouse, as discussed earlier.

Moreover, the interviews brought up the connection between voluntarism and responsibility. The interviews show that it was challenging for the members to explain the borders of responsibility. Also the interviewees connected responsibility as a personal matter. I think more discussion on the aspects of responsibility and voluntarism could increase the reflexivity and self-awareness of the members concerning their own practice. I think the community will benefit when the people of the community raise their awareness of the common responsibilities and yet, their right to voluntarism.

Based on the research material there is inequalities in the decision-making and in the participation of the members. Not all members are participating the weekly decision-making even though they are offered a possibility for that. Whatever the reason for the variable number of decision-makers is, the decisions concerning the community's issues would be more democratic if the participation would be more active. The community members could exchange ideas concerning the decision-making. It would be important to collect ideas of how to increase the participation to decision-making, what are the reasons for the members not participating and what would help them to participate.

Moreover, according to the interviews the members express different levels of participation. Some members' level of participation is challenged by the more talkative members' active participation. I think it is a common responsibility of the community to aim to bring out the voice of the voiceless in order to increase inclusion in the community. This matter should be discussed by the community members in order to bring it "visible" and raise awareness of it so that everyone in the community can reflect their own practice.

6 CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the main results of the research: the concepts of peer support and “alike support”, the importance of anti-discriminatory practice, the aspects of voluntarism and responsibility, and the equal decision-making. Furthermore, the chapter includes my professional development in relation to the research process.

6.1 Main findings

According to the results the concept of peer support included categorizing tone in it. Another term, “alike support”, was suggested to describe peer support in a less categorizing way. Based on the interviews the concept of peer support raised up the importance of terminology in the daily practice. The results show that the different elements and tones included in words should be critically viewed and assessed in order to find the less anti-oppressive terminology as possible. The oppressive treatment experienced by mental health rehabilitees in some institutions and the debate over terminology discussed in this study call for the importance of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice in clubhouses and in the work practice of professionals.

The interviews show that the scope of voluntary participation and responsibility for the community’s welfare was challenging to define. It was also considered a personal matter of each member. However the responsibility was associated with one’s level of energy and resources. Moreover, voluntarism as a principle is challenged by the regulations which the rehabilitation centers sometimes set for the members of clubhouse. The theory of closed and open autonomy may explain some of the differences regarding responsibility in the community. For some the main aim might be their personal rehabilitation and process at hand, and for others it might be the inclusion by participating the activities.

The results show that the equal decision-making of the community members is challenged by the variable activity in the weekly house meetings. Moreover, the

participation of the less talkative members could be encouraged in order to promote inclusion in the community.

As discussed earlier, clubhouse community includes anti-discriminatory principles in its practice. The study shows that the lack of authoric power positions, equal treatment of the members regardless of their background and the positive communication and feedback are empowering and unique elements for the members in clubhouse. Furthermore, I suggest that the results of this study can be used for developing the community of Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse. The results are recommended to be discussed by the members and employees together in order to raise self-awareness in the community, to implement possible changes in practices, and to raise further discussion concerning the topics of this study. In addition other clubhouses can benefit from the results of this thesis by reflecting and evaluating the results in relation to their community.

6.2 Professional development

My professional development as a researcher and as a student of social services has increased during the research process. While conducting a practical placement and the research in Eastern Helsinki Clubhouse, I became more sure of my interest for working in some sort of community where the basis is on respecting and valuing its members. When learning to understand and becoming more familiar with the principles of clubhouse, I realized that many of the principles are similar to what I have been studying so far in the Degree Programme in Social Services. After seeing the positive effect of the principles of clubhouse to its members, I want my own work ethics to be similar to those principles.

This research taught me that it is important to pay attention to the issues and terms which are often considered normal and which are established in our daily language. Sometimes the tones in those terms might have discriminatory or oppressive elements to ourselves or to someone else. I became more aware of the anti-discriminatory practice and its principles in social work. I also learned that the principles and goals which the communities have, are almost impossible to be fully reached. The communities consist

of humans who, in one way or another, are not able to reach perfection. However, the realization of the principles and goals can be improved by raising awareness of the issues which should be improved. I also learned that a community should be aware of its strengths in order to use them as a resource for reaching the principles and goals.

As a researcher, I learned more about conducting interviews with the interviewees' conditions. I came to know that it is important to observe the interviewees' gestures and hints when they feel uneasy to continue the interview. I also learned about the importance of encouraging less active people to participate the interviews, because they may have a lot to say and they may consider the interview as a positive experience even if they need some sort of pushing or encouragement to participate. Thematizing was quite challenging for me in the analysis process. However, through this research I learned more about constructing themes and finding connections between them.

Managing continuous time for writing the thesis was challenging. I had periods when I was working on the thesis on a regular basis and sometimes there was long periods of time in between. I learned that conducting a research requires continuous work in order to make it function and in order to keep the concentration on it. I became more aware of the sensitivity considering the themes of the research which is necessary, not to offend or give incorrect idea for the interviewees. For instance, when discussing voluntarism and responsibility with the interviewees I had to find delicate yet clear ways to present the questions, because the topic can be sensitive.

I hope that the clubhouse model as a rehabilitative community will raise more awareness in our society. According to my experience, it has a great potential of offering something different for mental health rehabilitees in comparison to many other rehabilitation centers and mental hospitals. The difference in clubhouse is the way the rehabilitees are treated and considered. I personally think that people regardless of their diagnoses have the same dignity as anyone else. Moreover, researching in the clubhouse context strengthened my concept that the mental health diagnoses is not connected to the capacities, skills and talents of the people. I learned that many times people need the correct circumstances and support in order to realize the skills and capacities which dwell in them.

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